



STAGE 4 PROJECT

MAY 2000

Project

Drawing on the 'markets as networks' paradigm in marketing, analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship, and its underpinning marketing strategy and management, between a focal firm and its partner(s).

Project background

There has been a shift away from a transactional view of marketing with its emphasis on arms' length exchange towards a more relational approach where ongoing and often strong relationships with customers, suppliers and at times even competitors characterise market exchange and the search for strategic advantage. In such partnerships, alliances, joint ventures, networks and associations, issues of trust and bond-building outweigh short term opportunism and aggressive price manoeuvres between firms. This approach is evident not only in industrial markets but also in consumer and service markets. A number of European academic researchers, known as the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group, have been very influential in conceptualising this approach, sometimes referred to as the 'markets as networks' paradigm.

By way of practical example, a manufacturer might work very closely over time with a customer in product or retail development, with a supplier in researching and developing a component or raw material, or indeed with other manufacturers, in a network or association, to co-market.

The student is asked to choose a particular firm (what we will call the focal firm in this instance) and examine and evaluate an ongoing relationship or partnership it has with another firm or firms. The marketing strategy and marketing management of both companies embeds this partnership and means that both parties work to nurture the relationship for their mutual benefit. It is also acceptable if a student wishes to analyse in depth a partnership involving more than two firms.

Acknowledgement

In an acknowledgement of at least one paragraph in length at the beginning of the project, the student must indicate the genesis or origins of his/her work: how the student came to choose these companies in the first instance? Does he/she work in the company? In what capacity? Did the student interview key personnel in the company? Have access to specially commissioned material? All secondary data, reports, company plans, interviews and other source material must be clearly referenced throughout the project so that the Examiner can identify and assess the student's own contribution.

NOVEMBER 1999

PLEASE READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY

1. This project is an exercise in investigative study. Because it is not being prepared under examination conditions, style and presentation will be taken into account as well as content.
2. The project must be typed on A4 paper. It should be presented in a folder or loose binder. Your name, student registration number and your project title must appear on the title page. The pages should be numbered and there should be a Table of Contents.
3. A one-page abstract forms part of the completed project. This abstract should be a brief description of the **objective** to be achieved by the project, the **methods** used and the **conclusions** reached.
4. We would envisage that you would not be able to do justice to the topic in less than 8,000 words. On the other hand you should not exceed 10,000 words.
5. You must acknowledge all your sources. You should do this by including the name of each author in brackets at the relevant point in the text and appending a bibliography at the end of your text. This should be in alphabetical order and should include the author's name, the title, the publisher and the city and date of publication. The quality of your bibliography is an important element in the overall assessment of your project.
6. This project will be assessed and marked like the other subjects in **Stage 4**. You will not have passed **Stage 4** until you have passed the project.
7. The project is due by **FEBRUARY 8TH**. As time management is a major feature of the discipline of report writing, projects submitted after the due date will not be accepted. ***Students should, therefore, start work on the project immediately as excuses relating to mishaps (poor health, computer failure, typing) in the final week will not be accepted.***
8. A two-part project form is enclosed with this notice. Please complete **BOTH** parts and staple on the outside of front cover. One part of the form will be returned to you as acknowledgement of receipt.
9. Since the project is treated as an examination subject, The Marketing Institute staff **cannot** assist you with the interpretation of the brief or sources of information.
10. The same sanction applies to copying as applies in the Examination Hall - all subjects in the sitting are deemed to have been failed and the candidate may not register as a student with the Institute thereafter. Please sign the attached statement and incorporate it into your project after the bibliography.